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****GAO REPORT AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST****

KENNEDY CALLS FOR PROPER REBUILDING OF NEW ORLEANS HOSPITALS

LIFE-SAVING FACILITIES FACING ROADBLOCKS TO REBUILDING

Washington, D.C. – Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy released the following statement on the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report outlining the inadequate funding of two New Orleans hospitals devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Kennedy expressed his concern that the dangerously incompetent under funding of these life-saving health care facilities leaves residents without the security of knowing their hospitals can fully and properly take care of them.

HELP Committee Ranking Member, Senator Kennedy said, "GAO reminds the nation once again of the serious human consequences of the Administration's failures in its response to the Hurricane Katrina tragedy. Congress authorized tens of billions of dollars in aid and support but the people of New Orleans have been left without adequate medical care because of White House incompetence. We have an opportunity to create a new hospital system in New Orleans that could be a model for the best in modern health care and it makes no sense to blow it."

The lack of services in New Orleans is staggering, with only 1/3 of capacity compared to pre-Katrina levels. Emergency services are in critical conditions with as long as a two-hour wait for patients to be unloaded from ambulances. Emergency services are in critical condition with as long as a two-hour wait for patients to be unloaded from ambulances. This report shows that more needs to be done before residents who left can call New Orleans home again.

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